

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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POLICY

MAR 20 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR Director
Information Security Oversight Office
General Services Administration

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Executive Order 12065, "National Security Information"

Your 23 February 1981 letter solicits DoD suggestions for amending Executive Order 12065, "National Security Information." This Department believes that a number of areas in the Order can be amended to improve the Information Security Program. These areas of possible change are described broadly in the attachment.

As a general observation, it is noted that the present Order is cast in an "openness in government" context. Many people, including those in allied countries, perceive this as something of an anomaly since this Order governs secrecy. More specifically, there is some concern that the tone of the present Order has had an unintended but nevertheless significant and negative impact on intelligence operations. Consideration should be given to modifying Executive Order 12065 to give a clearer indication of intent to protect classified information. Wholesale secrecy is not advocated, but clearly there is the need to protect national security information from open disclosure and the Government should commit itself to this idea in a clear, unambiguous fashion. It is not a question of keeping the American people from the light, but of keeping our adversaries in the dark.

I am prepared to undertake drafting possible changes to the Order for the purpose of obtaining full coordination with the various departments and agencies concerned with the Information Security Program. I am also prepared to provide such assistance to your office or to a group that may be assembled for the purpose. Accordingly, I will appreciate your keeping me apprised of further developments.

Arthur F. Van Cook
Director of Information Security

Attachment

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